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Thank you for your letter of 5 February 2018, about the Welsh language on Intercity Express trains.

Firstly, let me say that the contract for the Intercity Express Programme trains is neutral on what language should be used for the Passenger Information System (PIS) and for passenger facing labels. The relevant specific language requirements are instead set out in the 'Technical Standards for Interoperability' where it states that the train should be capable of providing information, both audible and visual, in more than one language.

The choice of language as well as the number of languages are left to the Railway Undertaking, in this case Great Western Railway (GWR) as the operator. Currently, the Passenger Information System on the Intercity Express trains is configured to present messages in a single language but the train can be modified should current or future franchisees believe that is appropriate in connection with the implementation of their Welsh language policies.

In relation to the question of the Welsh language specifically, I confirm that the current GWR franchise agreement makes no reference to the use of the Welsh language, as it is not designed to repeat wider legislative or other obligations that apply to other organisations in a similar position. GWR is however, subject to the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and has published its Welsh Language Policy in the light of that Measure. This policy has been discussed with the Welsh Language Commissioner and a series of undertakings agreed, which I understand GWR are confident they can deliver.

I can assure you that the Department will continue to work with train operators to ensure that the responsibilities as set out in the Welsh Language Scheme are met.

Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT

